DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 094 907 RC 008 042

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TITLE Knowledgeables' Opinions of Changes in Agriculture and Business in Twenty-six Counties, 1960-1972, S-79 Regional Research Project.
PUB DATE 6 Feb 74
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Rural Sociology Section of the Annual Meeting of the Agricultural Scientists (Memphis, Tennessee, February 1974)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Agriculture; American Indians; *Anglo Americans; Business; Community Surveys; Employment Opportunities; Income; Industry; *Negroes; Opinions; *Rural Population; *Southern Attitudes; Tables (Data); Youth Opportunities

ABSTRACT

The paper examined the opinions of black and white knowledgeables in 26 counties of Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee pertaining to changes in agriculture and business from 1960 to 1972. Respondents were questioned about changes in business, industry, employment opportunities, real income, local businessmen's status, wage earners' status, youth opportunities, and economic prospects for the next 10 years. The results indicated that the majority of the knowledgeables in the 26 study areas believed the business and industry situation in their respective counties had improved in the last 10 years and this trend would continue in spite of a less than optimistic view about existing youth opportunities. Tabular data is given for each county. (NQ)

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KNOWLEDGEABLES' OPINIONS OF CHANGES IN AGRICULTURE AND BUSINESS IN TWENTY-SIX COUNTIES, 1960-1972, S-79 REGIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT

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CHANGES IN AGRICULTURE

The percentages of total, Black and White knowledgeables who answered yes to "Have there been any important changes since 1960 in agriculture and land use in this county?" are shown in Table 1. Fifteen of the 26 counties had over a 90 percent response in this category. Only two counties in Kentucky, Perry and Harlan, fell below the 70 percent level of positive responses. The low 17 percent rate representative of Perry county and 46 percent rate representative of Harlan County are probably due to limited agriculture in these areas.

Specific changes noted by Louisiana respondents revealed an anticipated trend. Farms are getting larger in size and decreasing in numbers. Mechanization is largely replacing manual labor, and soybean and cattle production are replacing cotton to a great extent. Only one Louisiana Parish (County), Livingston, fell below the 90 percent line of yes responses to the original question. Over half of this parish is owned by lumber companies; therefore, traditional agriculture has never been prevalent in the parish. A trend toward more part-time farming in Livingston parish seems to be associated with the practice of commuting to jobs in adjacent urban parishes. Open-end responses were not available for the remaining states included in the study.

A third question related to agriculture was intended to determine if agriculture conditions had improved or gotten worse. Personal value systems toward the ideal of the family farm versus greater production with less effort expended contributed to confusion in interpretation of this question. Louisiana respondents often indicated that objectively, conditions had improved, but from a personal or subjective viewpoint they were not sure. As this confusion probably prevailed in other states, one must interpret the findings with caution.

No distinct pattern was evident by either race or state. The states which are most dependent on traditional agriculture, notably, Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama seemed to have experienced the highest rates of improvements; whereas, the less traditional agricultural states of Tennessee and Kentucky had fewer respondents who thought agricultural conditions had improved.

Paper presented at the Rural Sociology Section of Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists Meeting, Memphis, Tennessee, February 3-6, 1974.

RC 008042

In keeping with other research findings and also with the Louisiana respondents' views of changes occurring in agriculture, I believe that changes in agriculture are having diverse impacts on the quality of life of rural residents.

CHANGES IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Important Changes in Business and Industry

A response of yes was dominant from respondents in all counties for the question, "Have there been any important changes in the past 10 years in business and industry in this county or nearby areas that affect this area?" As shown in Table 2, Perry County, Kentucky, with a 73 percent response rate had the lowest percentage of "yes" responses.

Where differences in response rates varied by race, Whites tended to believe that change had occurred more often did the Blacks. The most extreme cases of different views by race were in Tunica County, Mississippi, and Houston County, Tennessee.

Employment Opportunities

The knowledgeables generally believed that employment and business opportunities had increased in their counties in the last 10 years. (Table 2) Notable exceptions were Harlan and Perry Counties in Kentucky, Clay and Tunica Counties in Mississippi and Hancock in Tennessee. Fifty-four percent of the knowledgeables in Harlan county and 39 percent in Perry County, Kentucky, indicated that job opportunities had actually decreased. The only other dramatic decreases reported were by Blacks (66%) in Clay County, Mississippi.

Real Income

In terms of real income - that is, taking into account changes in both prices and earnings - a majority of the respondents believed that people in their counties were better off than they were 10 years ago. (Table 3) However, the positive responses were not overwhelming in most of the counties. Again respondents in Harlan and Perry Counties, with less than 50 percent saying "real" income had improved, were the most pessimistic of the counties represented in this report. In fact, 60 percent of the Blacks in Perry County believed that "real" income had decreased.

Local Businessmen's Status

In general, the situations of local businessmen in the study areas was reported as improved. (Table 4) However, only 34 percent of the respondents in Clay County, Mississippi, reported improved conditions. Sixty-six percent of the Blacks in Clay County felt that the situation was worse than 10 years ago. Blacks were notably more pessimistic than Whites in Clark, Fayette and Tallapoosa Counties in Alabama; Perry County in Kentucky; East Feliciana Parish in Louisiana; and McCormick in South Carolina.

Wage Earners Status

Generally wage earners were reported to be better off than they were ten years ago. (Table 4) Most exceptions to this view were held by Blacks in Perry County, Kentucky; McCormick County, South Carolina; and Houston and Humphreys Counties, Tennessee.

Opportunities for Youth

The most depressing data reported in this section of the study was concerned with the opportunities for young people. (Table 5)

Changes in Opportunities for Youth. Less than 50 percent of the respondents in ten of the 22 counties, (Kentucky data missing) reported improvement in the opportunities for youth in their respective counties. The most optimistic views were held by respondents in Monroe and Fayette, Alabama; Livingston and Nachitoches, Louisiana; and Lawrence, Mississippi. Livingston Parish, Louisiana, is now part of an SMSA, which accounts for the opportunities for its youth and Nachitoches Parish has a state college and a population of approximately 15,000 which contribute to the opportunities in that Parish. Lack of knowledge regarding the other counties, prevents any generalizations being made about changes in opportunities for youth.

Current Opportunities for Youth. More than the 50 percent of the White respondents in only four counties rated current opportunities for youth as good: Monroe in Alabama, Lawrence in Mississippi, Livingston in Louisiana and Humphreys in Tennessee. However, the Black response rates to "good opportunities" were less than 50 percent in all 26 counties. In 14 of the counties, over 50 percent of the Blacks rated the opportunities as poor and in seven counties over 50 percent of the Whites rated the current situation for opportunities for youth as poor.

The results presented in this section carry significant meaning for those persons concerned with rural development. If the situation is as real as perceived by the respondents, then migration out of the most depressed of these counties is probably inevitable.

Rating of Economic Prospects for 10 Years to Come

Although opportunities for young people generally were not rated as good by the knowledgeables, their ratings of economic prospects for the next ten years were quite optimistic. On an index with very good equal to one and poor equal to four, respondents' mean ratings in 14 counties were between one and two. The mean of 2.7 for East Feliciana in Louisiana and 3.0 for Hancock in Tennessee were the only counties on the poor side of the midpoint of the index. (Table 6)

Although the real economic prospects are unknown, it is doubtful that they are as good as the knowledgeables perceive them.

Summary

In general, knowledgeables in the 26 study counties believed that the business and industry situation in their respective counties had improved in the last 10 years. There was also general optimism that this trend will continue, in spite of a less than optimistic view about existing opportunities for youth in their counties.

Table 1. Knowledgeables' Opinions of Changes in Agriculture in 26 Southern Counties, 1960-1972, S-79 Regional Research.

State	County	Total N	Percentages Who Indicated Important Changes In Agriculture			Conditions Related to Agriculture: Percentages Saying Improved			Conditions Related to Agriculture: Percentages Saying Gotten Worse		
			Total	Blacks	Whites	Total	Blacks	Whites	Total	Blacks	Whites
Alabama	Clark	31	96	99	95	73	75	73	20	25	18
	Monroe	29	99	99	99	96	86	99	0	0	0
	Fayette	22	95	99	95	67	67	74	14	0	16
	Tallapoosa	34	94	75	97	68	75	69	10	0	12
Kentucky	Harlan	33	46	60	40	21	29	19	18	14	19
	Perry	30	17	40	13	0	0	0	32	40	30
	Whitley	22	99		99	83		82	6		6
	Wolfe	27	62		62	52		52	12		12
Louisiana	E. Feliciana	40	95	87	99	68	47	80	13	27	4
	Franklin	40	99	99	99	80	73	84	13	7	16
	Livingston	40	77	80	75	46	38	50	8	23	0
	Nachitoches	40	92	93	92	88	85	90	6	8	5
	Union	40	98	93	99	74	67	79	18	27	13
Mississippi	Clay	35	88	83	89	71	66	72	5	16	3
	Coahoma	35	91	99	88	80	87	77	2	12	0
	Holmes	35	85	99	93	85	66	89	0	0	0
	Lawrence	35	99	99	99	97	99	96	0	0	0
	*Neshoba	46	93	99	95	91	99	90	2	0	3
	Tunica	35	97	99	96	88	71	89	8	14	7
S. Carolina	Georgetown	40	76	77	76	48	50	46	20	21	19
	Jasper	19	95	99	92	79	99	67	11	0	17
	McCormick	17	88	50	99	41	0	54	18	25	15
Tennessee	Hancock	29	71			56			15		
	Houston	38	71	60	72	68	25	73	6	25	3
	Humphreys	32	78	0	81	54	99	52	13	0	13
	Union	25	96			63			0		

*Indian minority, not Black.

Table 2. Knowledgeables' Opinions of Changes in Business and Industry and Changes in Employment Opportunities in 26 Southern Counties, 1960-1972, S-79 Regional Research.

State	County	Total N	Important Changes in Business & Industry			Business & Employment Opportunities Increased			Decreased		
			Total	Black	White	Total	Black	White	Total	Black	White
Alabama	Clark	31	97	88	99	90	75	96	0	0	0
	Monroe	29	99	99	99	99	99	99	0	0	0
	Fayette	22	99	99	99	95	99	95	0	0	0
	Tallapoosa	34	94	99	93	85	99	83	3	0	3
Kentucky	Harlan	33	83	63	90	22	38	17	54	63	50
	Perry	30	73	60	76	32	0	39	39	0	48
	Whitley	22	99		99	99		99	0		0
	Wolfe	27	99		99	85		85	4		4
Louisiana	E. Feliciana	40	83	67	92	60	53	64	15	27	8
	Franklin	40	88	93	84	68	67	68	28	33	24
	Livingston	40	97	99	96	85	87	83	0	0	0
	Nachitoches	40	93	87	96	68	67	68	13	7	16
	Union	40	95	99	92	88	99	80	3	0	4
Mississippi	Clay	35	97	99	96	57	33	62	20	66	10
	Coahoma	35	88	99	85	85	87	85	8	0	11
	Holmes	35	94	83	96	97	99	96	0	0	0
	Lawrence	35	99	99	99	97	75	99	0	0	0
	*Neshoba	46	95	66	99	97	83	99	0	0	0
	Tunica	35	88	42	99	40	42	39	5	14	3
S. Carolina	Georgetown	40	99	99	99	77	64	84	8	7	8
	Jasper	19	99	99	99	95	86	99	5	14	0
	McCormick	17	82	75	85	76	75	77	6	0	8
Tennessee	Hancock	29	83			55			24		
	Houston	38	92	57	99	74	29	84	13	29	10
	Humphreys	32	96	99	96	93	99	93	0	0	0
	Union	25	99			99			0		

*Indian minority, not Black

Table 3. Knowledgeables' Opinions of Changes in "Real" Income in 26 Southern Counties, 1960-1972, S-79 Regional Research.

State	County	Total N	Real Income Improved			Real Income Gotten Worse		
			Total	Blacks	Whites	Total	Blacks	Whites
Alabama	Clark	31	81	75	83	0	25	0
	Monroe	29	79	99	73	7	0	9
	Fayette	22	86	99	84	0	0	0
	Tallapoosa	34	68	75	69	6	0	69
Kentucky	Harlan	33	44	25	50	16	25	13
	Perry	30	47	0	56	13	60	4
	Whitley	22	76		75	0		0
	Wolfe	27	70		70	4		4
Louisiana	E. Feliciana	40	60	53	64	13	13	12
	Franklin	40	65	73	60	10	13	8
	Livingston	40	88	93	84	8	7	4
	Nachitoches	40	82	73	88	10	7	8
	Union	40	58	47	64	3	7	0
Mississippi	Clay	35	68	83	65	5	0	6
	Coahoma	35	82	75	85	5	0	7
	Holmes	35	99	99	99	0	0	0
	Lawrence	35	99	99	99	0	0	0
	*Neshoba	46	93	99	92	0	0	0
	Tunica	35	77	57	82	2	0	3
S. Carolina	Georgetown	40	70	57	77	10	21	4
	Jasper	19	99	99	99	0	0	0
	McCormick	17	82	75	85	0	0	0
Tennessee	Hancock	29	55			24		
	Houston	38	59	43	63	22	43	17
	Humphreys	32	80	67	81	10	33	7
	Union	25	76			0		

*Indian minority, not Black.

Table 4. Knowledgeables' Opinions of Changes in Local Businessmen's and Wage Earners' Status in 26 Southern Counties, 1960-1972, S-79 Regional Research.

State	County	Total N	Local Businessmen's Status						Status of Wage Earners					
			Improved			Gotten Worse			Improved			Gotten Worse		
			Total	Blacks	Whites	Total	Blacks	Whites	Total	Blacks	Whites	Total	Blacks	Whites
Alabama	Clark	31	84	63	91	10	38	0	97	99	96	0	0	0
	Monroe	29	90	99	86	0	0	0	83	99	82	7	0	5
	Fayette	22	91	67	99	0	0	0	99	99	99	0	0	0
	Tallapoosa	34	74	50	79	9	0	11	85	75	83	0	0	3
Kentucky	Harlan	33	77	86	75	6	14	4	78	75	79	3	13	0
	Perry	30	72	20	83	3	0	4	81	40	90	0	0	0
	Whitley	22	90		90	5		5	90		95	0	0	0
	Wolfe	27	74		74	7		7	90		90	0	0	0
Louisiana	E. Feliciana	40	73	53	84	10	20	4	85	93	80	0	0	0
	Franklin	40	79	99	68	3	0	4	90	99	83	3	0	4
	Livingston	40	93	93	92	0	0	0	93	87	96	3	0	4
	Nachitoches	40	92	92	92	0	0	0	98	93	99	0	0	0
	Union	40	83	87	80	0	0	0	98	99	96	0	0	0
Mississippi	Clay	35	34	33	34	31	66	24	77	66	79	5	0	6
	Coahoma	35	85	87	85	2	0	3	97	87	99	0	0	0
	Holmes	35	99	99	99	0	0	0	97	99	96	0	0	0
	Lawrence	35	99	99	99	0	0	0	99	99	99	0	0	0
	*Neshoba	46	99	99	99	0	0	0	95	66	99	2	16	0
	Tunica	35	85	99	82	2	0	3	91	99	89	5	0	7
S. Carolina	Georgetown	40	90	93	88	3	7	0	82	71	88	8	14	4
	Jasper	19	79	86	75	5	14	0	99	99	99	0	0	0
	McCormick	17	59	50	62	6	0	8	82	50	92	0	0	0
Tennessee	Hancock	29	82			4			76			17		
	Houston	38	92	99	90	3	0	3	79	57	84	3	43	3
	Humphreys	32	83	99	81	0	0	0	93	67	96	3	33	0
	Union	25	96			4			88			0		

*Indian minority, not Black.

Table 5. Knowledgeables' Opinions of Opportunities for Young People in 26 Southern Counties, S-79 Regional Research.

State	County	Total N	Change in Opportunities For Young People						Current Opportunities For Young People					
			Improved			Gotten Worse			Good			Poor		
			Total	Blacks	Whites	Total	Blacks	Whites	Total	Blacks	Whites	Total	Blacks	Whites
Alabama	Clark	31	68	63	70	3	13	0	26	13	30	32	50	26
	Monroe	29	86	86	86	0	0	0	56	43	64	38	14	5
	Fayette	22	91	99	95	0	0	0	45	0	53	9	33	5
	Tallapoosa	34	53	75	52	6	0	7	29	25	27	24	25	27
Kentucky	Harlan	33							13	0	17	60	88	48
	Perry	30							4	0	5	85	80	86
	Whitley	22							10		11	40		42
	Wolfe	27							4		4	15		15
Louisiana	E. Feliciana	40	40	40	40	8	20	0	8	7	8	58	60	56
	Franklin	40	43	53	36	13	13	12	8	7	8	62	73	54
	Livingston	40	80	73	84	3	7	0	40	7	60	28	47	16
	Nachitoches	40	75	80	72	3	7	0	25	20	28	38	53	28
	Union	40	28	26	28	15	13	16	3	0	4	28	80	64
Mississippi	Clay	35	42	16	48	42	66	37	20	16	20	45	16	37
	Coahoma	35	60	50	62	2	0	3	11	0	14	71	62	74
	Holmes	35	42	16	48	0	0	0	2	0	6	57	66	55
	Lawrence	35	99	99	99	0	0	0	71	25	77	28	75	22
	*Neshoba	46	76	50	80	0	0	0	30	33	30	60	50	62
	Tunica	33	22	42	17	2	0	3	5	14	3	71	71	71
S. Carolina	Georgetown	40	73	71	73	3	7	0	30	29	31	27	28	27
	Jasper	19	58	86	42	0	0	0	5	14	0	32	0	50
	McCormick	17	23	50	15	12	0	15	12	25	8	59	75	54
Tennessee	Hancock	29	18			25			10			72		
	Houston	38	46	29	50	0	0	0	14	29	10	46	57	43
	Humphreys	32	62	67	62	7	33	3	59	33	62	21	33	19
	Union	25	48			4			12			60		

*Indian minority, not Blacks.

Table 6. Knowledgeables' Rating of Future Economic Prospects for 26 Southern Counties, S-79 Regional Research.

State	County	Total N	Rating of Economic Prospects For 10 Years to Come: Total Mean[1]	Total Std. Dev.	Blacks Mean[1]	Blacks Std. Dev.	Whites Mean[1]	Whites Std. Dev.
Alabama	Clark	31	1.5	1.10	1.4	1.71	1.5	1.36
	Monroe	29	1.3			0.87	1.1	0.76
	Fayette	22	1.6	1.53	1.7		1.6	1.72
	Tallapoosa	34	1.5	1.05	1.5	2.50	1.5	1.13
Kentucky	Harlan	33	2.4	0.18	2.7	0.36	2.8	0.21
	Perry	30	1.8	0.14	2.4	0.02	2.7	0.31
	Whitley	22	1.8	0.17				
	Wolfe	27	2.3	0.19			2.3	0.19
Louisiana	E. Feliciana	40	2.7	0.79	2.5	0.87	2.4	0.89
	Franklin	40	2.4	0.85	2.3	0.79	2.5	0.87
	Livingston	40	1.8	0.82	1.9	0.72	1.8	0.88
	Nachitoches	40	1.9	0.73	1.9	0.57	1.8	0.80
	Union	40	2.0	0.88	2.1	0.81	2.0	0.92
Mississippi	Clay	35	2.2	1.00	2.5	1.12	2.2	0.97
	Coahoma	35	2.2	0.65	2.4	0.48	2.1	0.69
	Holmes	35	2.0	0.70	2.0	1.15	2.0	0.37
	Lawrence	35	1.8	0.38	1.5	0.50	1.9	0.34
	*Neshoba	46	1.8	0.49	2.0	0.00	1.8	0.52
	Tunica	35	2.2	0.71	2.6	0.50	2.2	0.38
S. Carolina	Georgetown	40	1.7	0.10	1.9	0.21	1.6	0.11
	Jasper	19	1.6	0.18	1.9	0.40	1.5	0.15
	McCormick	17	1.9	0.19	2.0	0.41	1.9	0.23
Tennessee	Hancock	29	3.0	0.18				
	Houston	38	2.1	0.14	2.2	0.49	2.1	0.14
	Humphreys	32	1.6	0.15	1.7	0.33	1.6	0.16
	Union	25	2.2	0.17				

[1] 1=very good, 2=pretty good, 3=only fair and 4=poor

*Indian minority, not Black.